The Field Museum

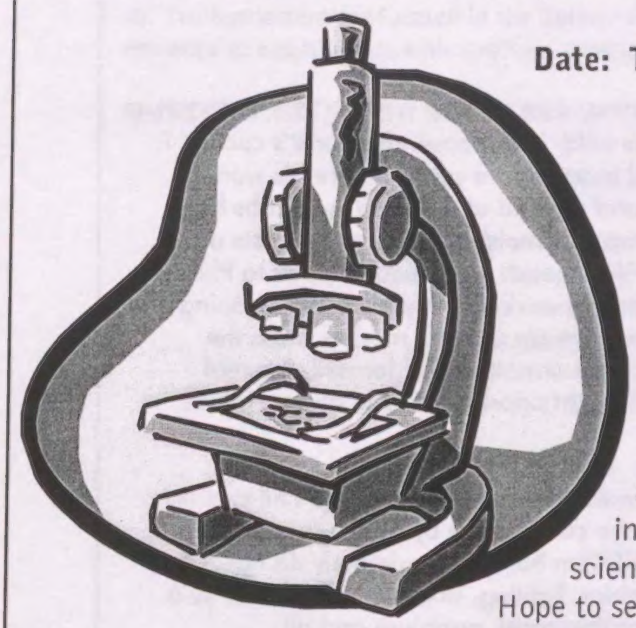
Natural News

Weekly Staff Newsletter
Monday, March 27, 2000

Welcome to new academic staff!

John McCarter and the Academic Affairs managers cordially invite you to a reception in Rice Wildlife Research Station to welcome new and recent Academic Affairs staff to the Museum.

Please join us for beer, wine, soda and snacks—and take this opportunity to meet many of the new Academic Affairs staff who have joined us in the last year.



Date: Thursday, March 30

Time: 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Rice Wildlife Research Station

All staff, volunteers, associates, students, interns, visiting scientists, are invited. Hope to see you there!

FIELD NOTES

Week of March 27

Staff/Volunteer Events

Tae Bo Class
- Monday, 5 p.m., Ground Floor East

Aerobics Class
- Tuesday, 5 p.m., Ground Floor East
- Thursday, 5 p.m., Second Floor (Plants of the World)

Green Sheet Meeting
- Wednesday, 3 p.m., Special Events

Public Events/Campus Events

Send stories, artwork, ideas to **Rodger Patience** at patience@fmnh.org or ext. 7286.

NOTE: THE DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY AT NOON! PLEASE HELP BY SUBMITTING ARTICLES EARLY!

Sue this Week

Electrical contractors are at work making final preparations at the corral site for Sue's arrival around April 10. Also, this is your last chance to see the insect exhibit in the Searle Lounge. Searle will be deinstalled on March 27 in order to begin set-up for the Sue exhibit.

How'd She Get Up There?

The mounting of Sue was a major undertaking in its own right. Mounting an irreplaceable paleontological find such as Sue is an extremely difficult process. That is why The Field Museum decided to hire expert mountmaker Phil Fraley for the job. Phil has more experience mounting real fossils (as opposed to casts) than anyone in the world, and he has proven his amazing abilities once again with the wonderful job he has done with Sue.

Because of Sue's scientific significance, The Field Museum wanted to do what they could to facilitate future research on Sue. To accomplish this, Phil created an armature that would allow almost every one of Sue's 327 bones to be individually removed for study.

Word of the day – armature

<*Armature, n. framework from which something is held; in this case, the world's coolest T. rex*> Creating the armature for Sue has taken Phil more than a year. Before his work could even begin, the bones had to be prepared and molded at the Dino Prep Labs here at The Field Museum and in Orlando, Florida. Once the molds were finished, casts of each bone were made. The actual bones along with the casts were then shipped to Phil's studio in New Jersey, where Phil and his team began to work their magic. Since shaping the steel armature could damage the real bones, casts were used as models when the armature was first being built. After each section of the armature was formed, the real bones were then put in place for fine tuning. The highest priority has, and always will be, the preservation of the fossil.

Once Sue arrives, Hall 4 will turn into a temporary staging area for her while Phil and his team begin to bring the bones and armature into the corral piece by piece. This process will continue almost until opening day. Workers will then have approximately 48 hours to set up Sue's faux limestone base, exhibit rail, graphics, lighting, and security system. By 6 a.m. on Wednesday, May 17, Sue will be ready for the world, armature and all.

Stay tuned for next week's update on the May 19 Sue Family Festival!

MUSEUM CAMPUS

SPRING BREAK TROLLEY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Daily service Monday, March 27 - Sunday, April 2, 2000
No daily service week of Monday, April 3 - Friday, April 7
Weekend service only Saturday, April 8 & Sunday, April 9
Daily service Monday, April 10 - Sunday, April 30

MUSEUM CAMPUS CHICAGO TROLLEY ROUTES

(1) **Parking Lot / Campus Route:** Begins at Soldier Field East Lot, continues to Adler Planetarium, Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum South Entrance, Field Museum West Entrance and returns to Soldier Field East Lot.

(2) **CTA / Campus Route:** Begins at CTA Green and Orange Line, continues to CTA Red Line, Hilton Cab Stand at Balbo and Michigan, Roosevelt Road Metra Station, Field Museum (in front of CPD Administration building), Adler Planetarium, Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum South Entrance, Field Museum West Entrance and returns to CTA stations.

(3) Trolleys regularly operate from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. but service hours will be extended in conjunction with the museums' spring break hours listed below.

(4) Trolley routes and service schedule are subject to change due to Soldier Field events. If the trolleys can not access the East Lot, they may be re-routed to exit at 18th Street via Lake Shore Drive and head north using the old Lake Shore Drive lanes. Re-routing is determined by Museum Campus and the Chicago Park District.

(5) Trolleymasters are located in the Soldier Field East Lot and at the base of Field Museum south entrance to assist guests with strollers, wheelchairs, general museum questions, etc.

MUSEUMS' EXTENDED HOURS FOR SPRING BREAK

ADLER PLANETARIUM

Week of Monday, March 27 - Sunday, April 30
Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. (one-hour extension)
Friday hours: 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

THE FIELD MUSEUM

Week of Sunday, April 16 - Saturday, April 22
Open 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily (one hour extension)

SHEDD AQUARIUM

Monday, April 10 - Friday, April 28
Open 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily (one hour extension)

OTHER CAMPUS NEWS

1. The Shedd Aquarium has raised its adult admission fee to $13 for adults (this includes admission to the Oceanarium). The increase became effective Monday, March 20. The $9 fee for children (ages 3-11) and seniors has not changed. Children 2 and under as well as Shedd Aquarium members are admitted free of charge.

2. For all Field Museum events requiring outside staging, load-in and load out of media trucks, heavy construction trucks, equipment, etc., (even if within Museum lease lines) coordination should be made with the Chicago Park District and the Museum Campus office. Coordinators should contact Christina Breslow of MCC or Kim Ryan at the Chicago Park District at 747-0752 at least two weeks prior to the event date for permit requirements and staging information. Smooth coordination helps to maintain the beauty of the park space and prevent damage to sidewalks, walls and landscaping. Staging information will be communicated to Shedd, Adler and Arvey Field if multiple events are scheduled for the same time.

3. At the March 20th Second Annual Chicago Visitors' Choice Awards ceremony, Chicago Trolley Company won two awards in the Service category. The first award was based on nominations from the general tourist public. The second award was based on nominations within the tourist industry.

4. Lois Weisberg, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by Mayor Daley and Governor Ryan at the March 20th Second Annual Chicago Visitors' Choice Awards.

If you have any questions, please call Christina Breslow at 312-665-7421.

President's Address

Thursday, April 20
Montgomery Ward Lecture Hall

Last names beginning A-M
9 to 10 a.m.

Coffee and bagels
10 a.m.

Last names beginning N-Z
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

We Need Your Help!

I'm sure that most of you have noticed the sizeable crowds that have been arriving to view the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition. Since its opening, more than 35,000 people have visited the exhibit. We are delighted with its success…but could use your help to make our visitors' experience the best that it can be. Over the past couple of weeks many of you have witnessed the long lines at the museum entrances, coat checks and exhibits areas. You have also probably seen the Visitor Services staff working feverishly to provide our visitors with quality service. We have doubled the number of contract staff in Visitor Services and Protection Services. However, they have limited Museum and/or exhibit knowledge. They are unable to help our visitors navigate through the Museum. This is where your assistance would be helpful. We need additional assistance in the following areas:

- Greeters
- Coat Check Volunteers
- Way finders, etc. (Where are the restrooms and exhibits?)
- Line Directors

Many of you throughout the museum have been kind enough to ask if there is something that you can do to help. We need volunteers who will provide our visitors with a warm smile and friendly conversation during our peak time periods:

- Wednesday 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- Friday 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- Saturday 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- Sunday 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.

We recognize the increased workload for everyone; therefore, we would appreciate any time that you can contribute to assist our visitors on the floor.

If you have a few hours or days that you could contribute to the Museum, please contact the Visitor Services office at extension 7944 by Monday April 3, 2000. Once we compile a list of all of the volunteers, we will conduct an informational meeting to define roles of each of the above positions.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration. I would like to extend my appreciation to those who have already volunteered: **John McCarter, Marilyn Martinson,** Human Resources Staff, **Cathleen Costello, Felisia Wesson** and **Steve Hines**.

Submitted by **Diane White**

DEAD SEA SCROLLS TICKETS

As many of you know, the Dead Sea Scrolls has been a tremendous success. As we enter our third week of the exhibit, ticket sales continue to be brisk and bookings by tour and school groups have escalated.

There have been numerous requests for tickets from internal departments as well. We want to be able to serve as many visitors as possible. However, for many dates and timeslots, demand for tickets has exceeded supply.

In order to accommodate as many general public, tour and school group visitors as possible, internal ticket requests will be granted subject to availability and at the discretion of the Visitor Services department.

If you need tickets for Dead Sea Scrolls, please do the following:

- Submit your request in writing (e-mail is acceptable) to Tracy Walker, acting manager of Visitor Services. **All requests must be made directly by a department director or Vice President.**
- List a contact name, department, extension, and date of request.
- Brief description of the event/group the request is for.
- List first and second choices of the date(s), number and preferred timeslot(s) of tickets needed.
- Indicate the number of adult, child, senior, and/or student tickets needed.
- Indicate by what date you would need the actual printed tickets. This will be the date they will be available for pick-up in the Visitor Services office.

A reminder that the hourly capacity of the exhibit is only 350 people and is strictly enforced. We would appreciate your requests as far in advance as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Submitted by Diane White

Attention

Green Sheet Coordinators

Name of Event: Green Sheet Intra-net site Meeting		
Date of Event: March 30, 2000		Time: 2:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.
Location: Lecture Hall 1 (Montgomery Ward Hall)		
Staff Member(s) Present: Representatives from AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES, EDUCATION, ENGINEERING, HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE, MUSEUM CAMPUS, PUBLIC SERVICES , SECURITY, SPECIAL EVENTS, and VISITOR SERVICES, COMPUTING, AUXILIARY BOARDS		
Ext. #:		# of Guests:
Issued By: Jacqueline Benitez	Issue Date: 03/14/00	Extension: 7911
Account/Project Number: 0000-000-0000-0000		

Join us on THURSDAY March 30, 2000

for an UPDATE on the Green Sheet Intra-net Site

Learn about:

- E-mailing Green Sheets - no more hard copies
- Museum Wide Event Calendar
- Green Sheet Creator
- Charge Back Policy

Find out about:

- Special Events Services
- Responses to Survey

If you have any questions regarding this meeting,
please contact the Public Services Department at extension 7911.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Rieppel engages "snakes with legs" debate in *Science*

The May 17 issue of *Science* features the latest volley in a debate about the origins and evolution of snakes, an article by **Olivier Rieppel**, curator of fossil reptiles and amphibians, and collaborators. The article describes a new species called *Haasiophis*, which lived in a shallow marine environment during the Cretaceous in what is now the West Bank. Previous research based on two *Pachyrhachis* specimens (other "snakes with legs") from the same formation argued that snakes evolved from marine reptiles.

Drawing on the two *Pachyrhachis* cited in the earlier work, and the newly described *Hassiophis*, Olivier and his colleagues dispute the earlier study, positing that both species were aquatic, but belong to a group of more advanced, big-mouthed snakes known as macrostomatans, whose modern-day counterparts include boas and pythons. Because all macrostomatans are near the top of the snake family tree, these fossil snakes cannot be related to the primitive mosasaurs, Olivier argues, and does not support the theory that snakes had their origins in the sea.

The day the issue hit the newsstands, the story had already been picked up by *The Chicago Tribune*, the Associated Press, and CNN, among other media outlets, thanks to the expert press-agentry of **Pat Kremer** and her staff in Public Relations.

FMNH anthropologists debunk Atlantis on The Learning Channel

Anthropology chair **Gary Feinman** and adjunct curator **Linda Nicholas** were featured March 16 in the program, *Atlantis Uncovered*, on The Learning Channel. Feinman and Nicholas were interviewed at several sites in Oaxaca, Mexico, including the prehispanic site of El Palmillo, where they currently are excavating. The show, which also featured interviews with other archaeologists, including Colin Renfrew (Cambridge University), Kenneth Feder (Central Connecticut State University), and Gordon Hillman (University College, London), served to debunk the popular notion that a lost city in the Atlantic gave rise to the emergence of civilizations on both sides of the ocean around 12,000 years ago.

Expedition to Mindoro Island, Philippines Funded by Comer Grant

Two expeditions are being planned by **Mark Westneat** (Zoology-Fishes) to survey the fish diversity of coral reefs of the Western Pacific. A recent grant of $85,000 was awarded to the project by the Comer Science and Education Foundation. The award will be used entirely to support field work in the Philippines and in the Solomon Islands.

The first expedition will happen this May, when Mark Westneat and **Mike Alfaro** (Zoology- Fishes) will join a collaborative team that includes staff from the Smithsonian, the Australian Museum and scientists from the Philippines, including staff of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the University of the Philippines. The expedition goal is to collect fish specimens around Mindoro Island during a circumnavigation of the island in local diving boats. There have been many expeditions to sample fishes around the major island groups in the area, including the islands of Luzon, Panay and Negros. However, the shorefishes of Mindoro are poorly known, yet the fauna there may play a key role in understanding biogeography and diversity patterns of the region.

Mindoro Island, a continental fragment, is now located in the Philippine Islands near the southwest end of Luzon, but some 30 million years ago (MYA) it was positioned off the Mainland Asia coast. Luzon originated geologically (volcanically) about 45-50 MYA far to the east in the Pacific. About 30 MYA, the two islands began movements that would bring them into close contact, and they have been in close contact for only the past 10 million years. Each island potentially harbors distinct shorefish faunas that today are separated by only a few tens of kilometers.

The questions this expedition hopes to answer are: do the islands of Mindoro and Luzon have distinct fish faunas, and if they do, are the faunas mixing in the juxtaposed areas? Many small, cryptic shorefish species are narrowly endemic and seem to provide among the best information on these types of questions. The cryptic shorefishes of Mindoro and the adjacent coast of southern Luzon are essentially

unknown. Steadily increasing fishing pressure on Philippine shorefishes underscores the need to conduct a shorefish survey soon. Specimens collected will play an important role in studies of coral reef fish feeding biology and the morphological and molecular systematics of reef fish groups that are being undertaken here at The Field Museum.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Reminder: Performance Appraisal Information Sessions

The Human Resources Department has scheduled a series of meetings for every staff person to be educated about this year's Performance Appraisal process and the NEW Multi-Source Feedback form. Each session has been tailored to meet the needs of different groups of individuals. It is important that you attend the session that has been designed with you in mind. Everyone should have received an invitation and should plan to attend one of the following sessions:

New Staff (anyone hired between April 1, 1999 and March 31, 2000):
Tuesday, March 28 - 10:30 a.m.
OR
Wednesday, March 29 - 8:30 a.m.

Directors/Managers/Supervisors:
Tuesday, March 28 - 8:30 a.m.
OR
Wednesday, March 29 - 2:00 p.m.

All Staff (anyone not in the two categories listed above):
Tuesday, March 28 - 2:00 p.m.
OR
Wednesday, March 29 - 10:30 a.m.

If you have any questions, please call ext. 7271. We look forward to seeing you there!

Here is the staff and volunteer admission policy for *The Dead Sea Scrolls.*

All staff and volunteers along with their immediate family are eligible to enter The Museum and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* at no charge. Tickets are on a first come, first served basis and are subject to availability (including time restrictions—if a particular time slot has been sold out, there are no tickets available). Tickets for staff, volunteers and family are available on the day of (not in advance). If you need advance ticketing, you will need to purchase a ticket or work with your area vice-president/ director, to request a VIP ticket.

If you have any other questions, please call Human Resources.

Submitted by Ariel Orlov

EDUCATION

Harris Loan Center is collecting reusables

We need clean old nylons, 2 liter bottles, baby food jars, and small milk cartons for a project we're doing. People can bring their reusables to the Harris Loan Center by March 30th.

We would appreciate it and it is good for the environment!!! Thanks!

Submitted by Renee Chester